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Youth Leadership Development Program Conference on 'Women leadership development'

In celebration of the International Women's Month, PAS Abidjan organized a conference on '*Women leadership development*' on Wednesday March 5, 2008. This program designed for young girls from 10 to 18 years old particularly top of their grade levels, gathered more than 130 participants including students, teachers, media professionals and school principals from 16 public, private and confessional High Schools in Abidjan. This conference was designed to empower and energize young girls.

The panelists were the US Ambassador Wanda Nesbitt, as well as other Embassy staff, including Aminata Coulibaly FSN of the year, Nicole Kasse from the Consular Section and Dr. Viviane Kouadio from the Health Unit. Other panelists were Maria Cecilia Icaro from the United Nations Organization in Cote d'Ivoire, Angèle Gnonsoa from the Ivorian Minister and Parliamentarian Women Network, Hortense Dodo, an American Fulbright Professor, Louisa Bia Bi Tia from the Ministry of National Education, and Marie-Laure Kindo, President of the World Children Well-being Association.

After the welcome address from the DPAO Etta Toure, the panelists shared their rich and moving testimonies recounting their career as schoolgirls to current professional experts. The Ambassador shared her exciting experiences from childhood to the present, highlighting key events relating to her educational and professional achievements. Through a brief PowerPoint presentation, Maria Cecilia focused on leadership strategies, picking as models a few powerful women leaders who succeeded against odds. The other panelists also attracted the participants' attention on leadership qualities in connection with both personal life and professional qualifications. The main message conveyed was a good leader should be characterized by humility, politeness, and respect for one's fellow human being, courage, hard work, self-confidence, determination, and moral integrity. The students were also told that being efficient leaders implies moral and physical health. Dr. Kouadio emphasized the risks and dangers of unprotected sex, as well as the importance of abstinence.

At the end of the event, the girls expressed their appreciation and requested follow up activities involving young audiences. To promote non-violence and conflict prevention among youth, the IRC presented 130 copies of Nouveaux Horizons books - '*The Anti-Defamation League's Hate Hurts: How Children Learn and Unlearn Prejudice*' and '*The Civic Education Guide*' to the young girls. Ambassador Nesbitt, in her closing remarks congratulated the young girls and the panelists who contributed to the success of this memorable program.

A follow up activity was scheduled for April 9, 2008 when the young participants will receive a book titled “*C’est le Moment ou jamais d’être une fille*” from Mrs. Marie-Laure Kindo, President of the World Children Well-being Association.



Partial view of the participants



APAO Etta Toure delivering the welcome remarks



Partial view of the participants



Ambassador Nesbitt [center] with Professor Dodo and Minister Gnonsoa



Panelists from left to right: Mrs. Bia Bi Tia, Dr. Kouadio, Mrs. Kassé and Coulibaly FSN of the Year



A memorable group photo of the Ambassador Nesbitt with the Young Girls

Digital Video Conference on ‘Women in Politics’ Conducted by Ambassador Jeanne Martin Cisse

Followed by a debate based on Hilary Clinton’s *Living History*

To celebrate the Women History Month PAS Abidjan organized a series of programs designed, to promote women participation and commitment to the development of their nation, and also to reinforce their leadership capacities.

On March 14, 2008, a two activity program on ‘Women Political Leadership’ was organized: a videoconference and a book discussion. The DCM, Mrs. Akuetteh Cynthia, welcomed the 80 female participants including ministers, parliamentarians, political leaders, women rights activists, the civil society representatives, and media professionals.

The first activity was a videoconference organized with ARS Paris and guest speaker Mrs. Jeanne Martin Cisse, the well-known diplomat, political figure, and women leadership promotion advocate. The speaker, the 82 years old woman, shared her experience as a knowledgeable woman leader and how she made her way into the political arena. She advised her Ivorian fellows to communicate and develop close relationships with their local community women. She pointed out the key role of women in the society by symbolically comparing them to ‘fire’, ‘water’, and ‘wind’ which are vital natural elements in life.

The second activity dealt with a conference based on Hilary Clinton’s book, ‘*Living History*’, the second of PAS initiated series of programs called ‘*Get Acquainted with the Presidential Candidates*’, aimed at reinforcing the Ivorian public knowledge of the United States electoral system along with biographical information on the Democrat and Republican presidential main candidates.

The panelists were Mrs. Consuela Fofana, a pharmacist, Mrs. Maconi Cisse, President of Benevolat USA-CI and a moderator, Mrs. Aminata Coulibaly, a returnee IV on US Elections 2008. Mrs. Fofana made a brilliant expose of the life of the Senator, the former American First Lady, and the democratic candidate for the US elections 2008. Her life is a mix of wonderful and hurtful experiences appealing people to both sides of political realities. Her life embraces all aspects of a woman life as a spouse, a mother, a political advisor, a woman leader racing with men in all sectors of life.

As for Mrs. Cisse, she deciphered the US election presidential electoral system, throwing more light on the way it works. She outlined the presidential electoral process which starts with the Constitution, the basic process of selecting the

president. Then, the next steps are the Primaries, the National Conventions, the General Election, and the Electoral College.

The participants were highly impressed by both programs which enriched their political and leadership experience. This memorable event was an opportunity to learn more successful strategies in politics and leadership. They asserted that both women life experiences inspired and gave them a push for future actions. Some of the participants who met with Mrs. Cisse Jeanne-Martin at international conferences on women issues planned to invite her in Côte d'Ivoire. The event was positively covered by Medias.



DCM Cynthia Akuetteh offering the opening remarks



Participants including Mayor Aka-Anghui, Ministers Angele Gnonsoa and Anne Messou (From Left to right)



Panelists: Mrs. Cissé, Coulibaly and Dr. Fofana (from left to right)



Partial view of the participants including parliamentarians, women political leaders.

Glory, Passion and Principle: The Story of Eight Remarkable Women at the Core of the American Revolution

On March 19, 2008, PAS Abidjan organized a conference based on the Nouveaux Horizons title '*Glory, Passion and Principle: The Story of Eight Remarkable Women at the Core of the American Revolution*'. The program gathered about 75 participants, mainly women parliamentarians, former ministers, women rights advocates, NGO leaders, Media professionals, and the Ivorian Women Leaders Caucus.

The panellists included Emily McCarthy, a Political Officer from the US Embassy Office of Regional Affairs, Omore Bernadette, an Accountant from the US Embassy RBFO, Kaba Yaya Fofana from the 'Ministere de la Famille et de l'Action Sociale' in Cote d'Ivoire, and Adjobi Gabrielle, a member of the Cabinet of the Minister of Defence. After the welcome address from the PAO Sharon White, the panellists took the floor, on turn, to unveil the biographical backgrounds of these 'remarkable women' who significantly contributed to the liberation and founding of the American nation, each in her own unique way. These women from different colonial origins, from slave to first lady, acted as warriors, writers, and committed political figures to help forge the current prosperous American nation. The common virtues of these heroes included courage, decisiveness, hard work, optimism, self denial, and passion to serve their country.

The participants qualified the book as a valuable legacy for them and also for future generations. Moreover, the book enhances the key role women play in the development of nations. They unanimously requested the Women Leaders Caucus to organize the kind of program to celebrate Ivorian women who contributed to the advancement of their country.



The PAO Sharon White delivering the welcome address



The panelists: Emily McCarty (Pol./Econ), Gabrielle Adjobi (Ministry of Defense), and Bernadette Omore (RBFO)



A partial view of the audience including the Minister Anne Messou (1st from right)



A partial view of the audience



Emily McCarty sharing her experience

Workshop: To Run an Effective High School Library

To support local libraries, PAS organized, jointly with the National Librarians Association (APSID-CI), a four day workshop addressed to 50 primary and secondary school teachers in charge of managing their school libraries. From March 25 to 28, 2008, the participants who came from various parts of the country were trained on 'How to Run an Effective High School Library'.

The program started with the welcome address from the PAO Sharon White, followed by the President of APSID-CI, and then the representative of the Ivorian Minister of National Education who delivered the opening address. The trainers included the Information Resource Center Director from the US Embassy, Marie-Laure Angoran, Mr. Bakayoko Bourahima, a knowledgeable professional librarian in charge of the Electronic data Management of the Ivorian Social Security Company, and Mr. Mahama Bamba, the Director of the Promotion of Quality and Standardization at the Ministry of Industry.

The workshop covered various aspects of librarianship including:

- the key role of the school library as an instrument to promote literacy, education, information provision, economic, social and cultural development
- the use of the OECD Macro thesaurus for material processing (classification, cataloguing, and indexing)
- collection development
- material acquisition policy
- fund-raising and partnership development strategies through case study
- and quality information management and delivery.

According to the trainees, the training empowered them with standards for effective and accountable management. They were able to acquire skills, knowledge and competencies essential to making a school library effective. They realized their valuable contributions as school librarians in providing information that equip students with learning skills that are fundamental to succeed in today's information society. Promoting reading also develops new ideas and help students develop their imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens. The training came out with significant and tangible results. The participants in accordance created a mobile library project for which PAS will provide a collection of books to be circulating among school libraries in Cote d'Ivoire. The workshop proceedings were immediately compiled as a reference document. – Please enjoy the pictures of the closing ceremony.



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- 1 – Participants reading resolutions
- 2 – Officials including Mrs. Tiony the president of the Librarians Association, the Representative of the Minister of Education, Mr. Jose and Mrs. S. Eiriz Political & Econ officer.
- 3 – Mr. Vila presenting certificates to the participants
- 4 – Group photo